



THE RECONSTRUCTION AND WESTERN FRONTIER VOCABULARY BELLRINGER

Vocabulary Terms and Analysis

H. VAQUEROS



The cowboy's lifestyle and methods were borrowed from the Spanish-speaking cultures in the Southwest; Spanish-speaking Mexican cattle men were called vaqueros. It is important to recall that many Spanish speaking Americans had entered the United States when the boundaries between Mexico and the US changed following the Mexican American War.

I. KU KLUX KLAN

This violent hate group was responsible for lynchings against African-Americans in the South in the years between the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement; rarely were the criminals punished. Most Americans today view the KKK as a group of hatemongers who are properly ridiculed and marginalized for their bigoted, racist, anti-Semitic, and discriminatory belief systems. However, during the 1920s, the Klan rode a wave of Nativism to great popularity. Over 5 Million members were in the KKK by the 1920s, and many were community leaders.



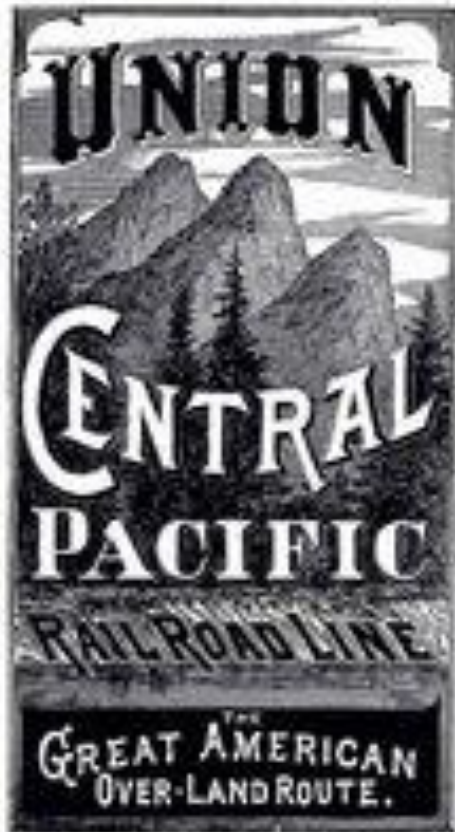
M. BARBED WIRE

This invention of Joseph Glidden was used by farmers to keep cattle and buffalo herds off of their land – some say the invention ended the “long drive” of cowboys on the open range.

The invention was simple enough – steel wire with a sharp barb bent into the metal every few feet. On the Great Plains, where wood was too scarce to construct a traditional fence, barbed wire did the trick.



F. CENTRAL PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY



This business constructed the western part of the nation's first transcontinental railroad – from Sacramento, CA to the Promontory Point, UT. The company hired thousands of Chinese workers.

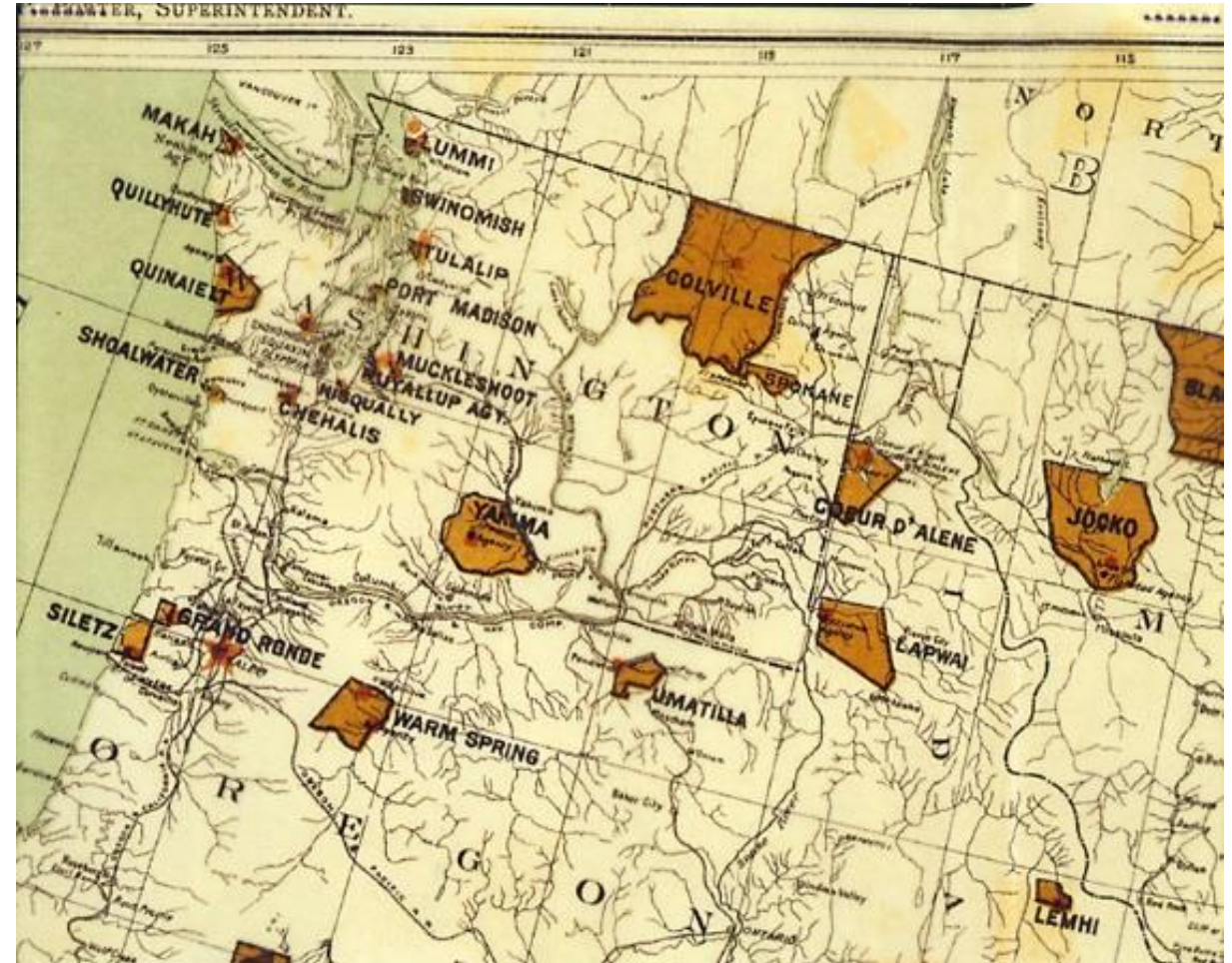
While the Central Pacific was working to construct tracks headed east; the Union Pacific began building in Omaha, NE and made its way west to Promontory Point, UT.

L. RESERVATIONS

Native American tribes were forced to live isolated on these poor tracts of land.

Reservations allowed Native Americans a certain amount of sovereignty; however, most were placed on land which had very little in the way of resources – causing the tribes to become dependent upon government supplies.

When Native Americans attempted to go “off the reservation,” they might be attacked by the US Army.



0. “THE FRONTIER”

The uncertain region between cities and towns already settled by Americans and unknown “others”: cultures like the Mexicans of the Southwest, the Native Americans of the Great Plains, or even the Mormon region of “Deseret” (present day Utah.)

The Frontier was considered the place of last resort for many Americans, and it was reassuring for many people to know that if their business or farms failed, they could always pull up stakes and head West.

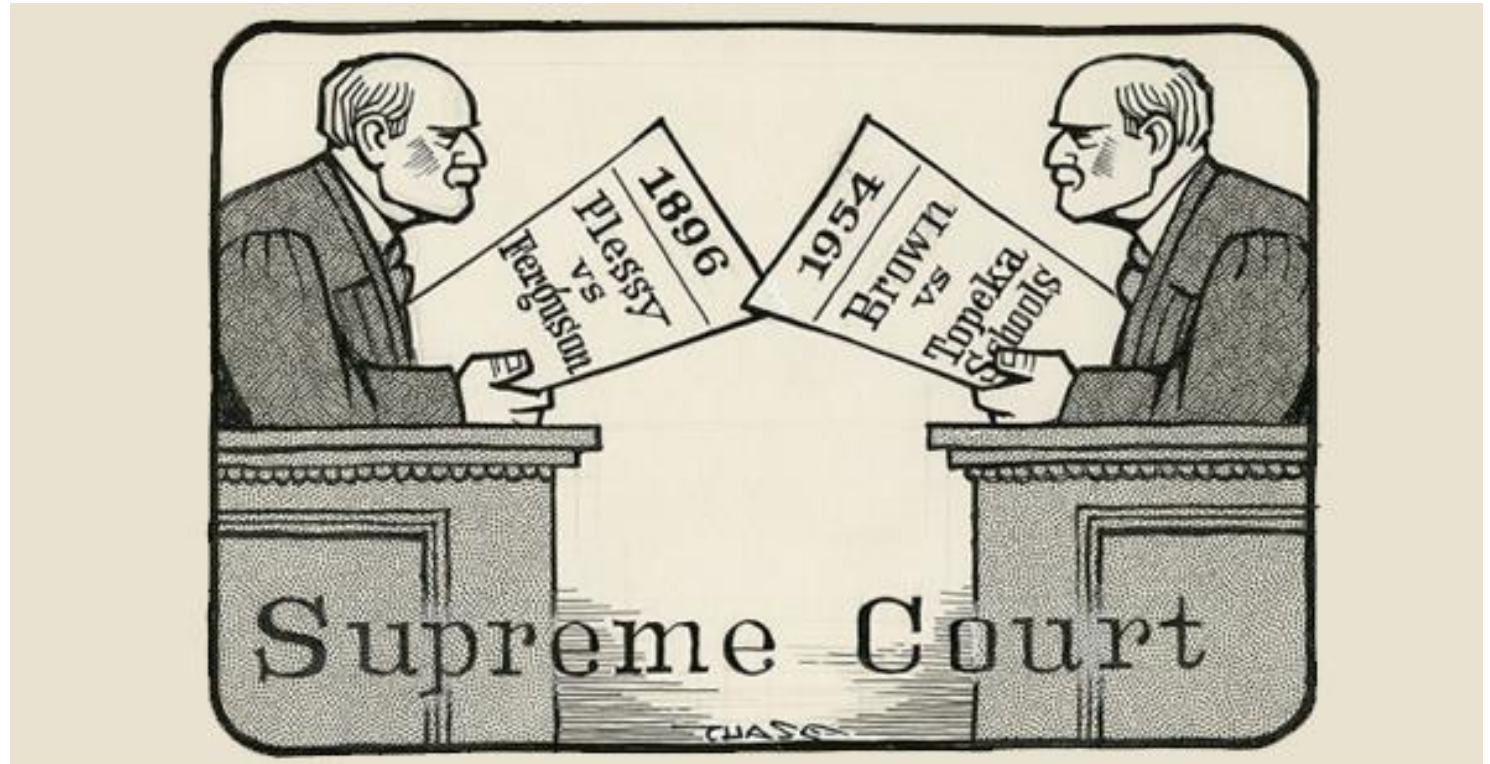


A. *PLESSY V. FERGUSON* (1896)

This Supreme Court case ruled that segregation was legal in the United States, as long as the institutions created were “separate but equal.”

The decision would remain the law of the land for many decades, allowing “Jim Crow” laws to emerge in the South.

Eventually, the *Plessy* decision would be overturned in 1954 by *Brown V. Board of Education, Topeka, KS.*

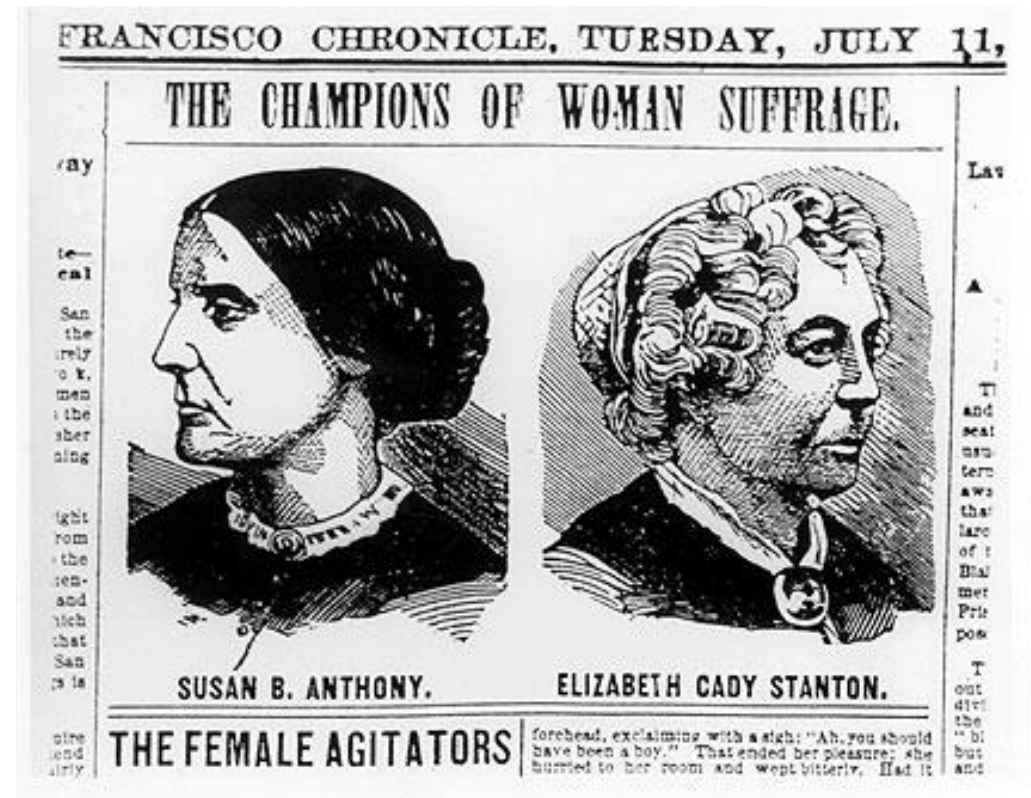


N. WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE

The first place to grant this was Wyoming Territory, in 1869.

The woman's suffrage movement was lead by outspoken activists like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, pictured to the right.

Unfortunately, it would take women another fifty years to earn the right to vote. When the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1919, women became eligible voters in all of the states.



D. SEGREGATION

Laws which enforced segregation in the South were called this – after an racist and bigoted comedy routine used to mock African-Americans.

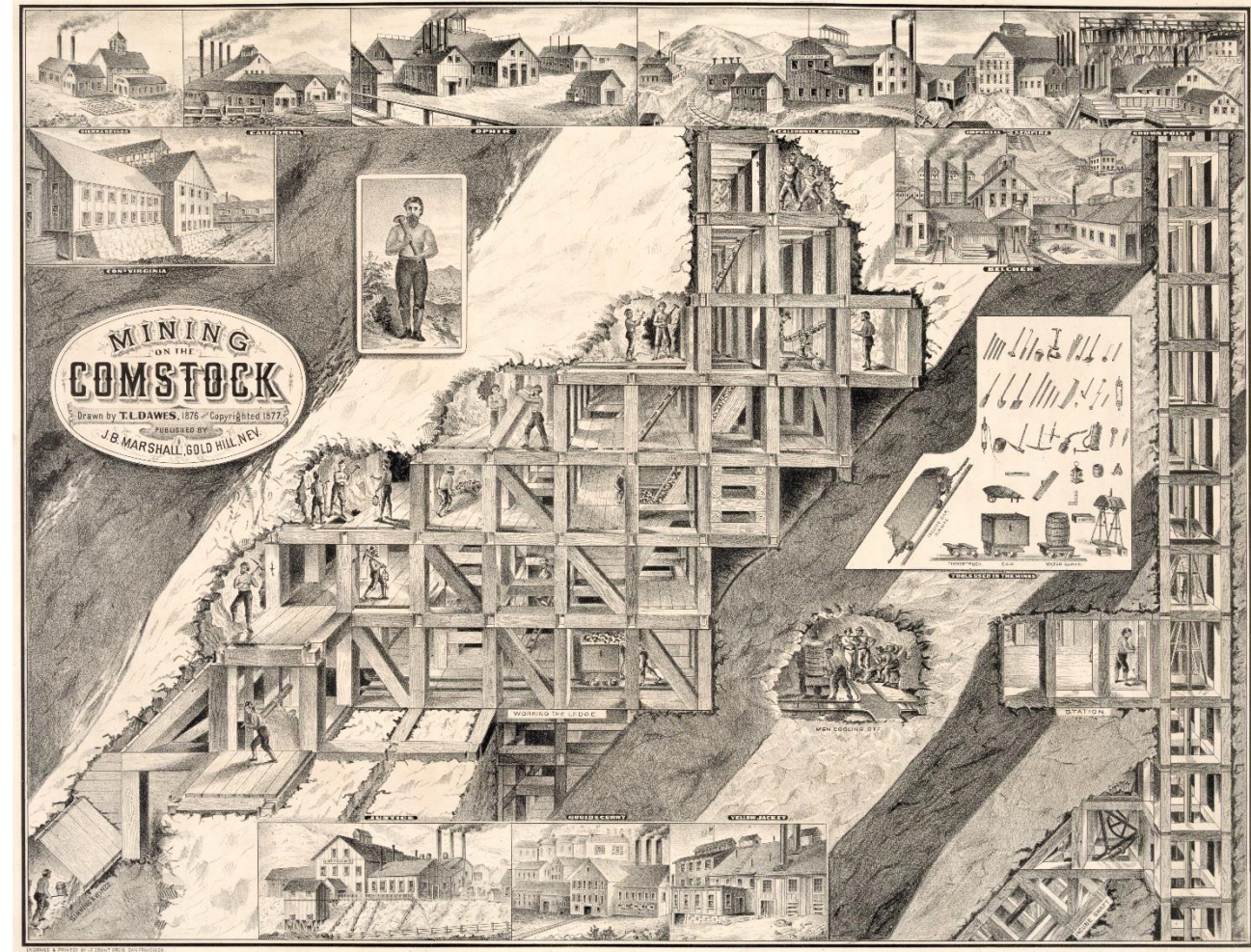
Among the places which were segregated in the south: restrooms, water fountains, bussing services, government buildings, and eventually, schools.



G. THE COMSTOCK LODGE

Discovered by an Irish immigrant and sold to a mining company for far less than its actual value, this mine produced over \$300 Million in gold and silver.

The town of Virginia City, Nevada was born over the Comstock Lode and remained a thriving “boomtown” for decades until the gold and silver mines ran out of ore.



J. LITERACY TESTS

These were used to prevent uneducated African-Americans (and Southern whites) from voting in national elections.

Indeed, they were also used to prevent well educated people from voting – if they happened to be African-American. Most literacy tests were administered by a voter registrar who might ask extraordinarily difficult questions to African-American voters – until they were dismissed.

The State of Louisiana

Literacy Test (This test is to be given to anyone who cannot prove a fifth grade education.)

Do what you are told to do in each statement, nothing more, nothing less. Be careful as one wrong answer denotes failure of the test. You have 10 minutes to complete the test.

1. Draw a line around the number or letter of this sentence.
2. Draw a line under the last word in this line.
3. Cross out the longest word in this line.
4. Draw a line around the shortest word in this line.
5. Circle the first, first letter of the alphabet in this line.
6. In the space below draw three circles, one inside (engulfed by) the other.

7. Above the letter X make a small cross.
8. Draw a line through the letter below that comes earliest in the alphabet.

Z V S B D M K I T P H C

9. Draw a line through the two letters below that come last in the alphabet.

Z V B D M K T P H S Y C

10. In the first circle below write the last letter of the first word beginning with "L".



11. Cross out the number necessary, when making the number below one million.

10000000000

12. Draw a line from circle 2 to circle 5 that will pass below circle 2 and above circle 4.



13. In the line below cross out each number that is more than 20 but less than 30.

31 16 48 29 53 47 22 37 98 26 20 25

B. THE CHINESE EXCLUSION ACT

This law, passed in the early 1880s, forbid immigration to the United States from China.

Chinese workers were one of the first groups targeted by Congress in order to restrict immigration to the United States. The feeling was that if too many Chinese workers arrived, they would take jobs and premium land away from white settlers.



K. “EXODUSTERS”

Freedmen who left the South, crossed the Mississippi and lived in the dusty, desert-like prairie of the Great Plains were called this – their lives ran similarly to the Israelites who escaped Egypt.

Many African-Americans feared that their neighbors were so hostile to them in the South that their only option was to move away to the West.

Using the Homestead Act, large acreages were available.

All Colored People
THAT WANT TO
GO TO KANSAS,
On September 5th, 1877,
Can do so for \$5.00

IMMIGRATION.

WHEREAS, We, the colored people of Lexington, Ky., knowing that there is an abundance of choice lands now belonging to the Government, have assembled ourselves together for the purpose of locating on said lands. Therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we do now organize ourselves into a Colony, as follows:— Any person wishing to become a member of this Colony can do so by paying the sum of one dollar (\$1.00), and this money is to be paid by the first of September, 1877, in instalments of twenty-five cents at a time, or otherwise as may be desired.

RESOLVED. That this Colony has agreed to consolidate itself with the Nicodemus Towns, Solomon Valley, Graham County, Kansas, and can only do so by entering the vacant lands now in their midst, which costs \$5.00.

RESOLVED, That this Colony shall consist of seven officers—President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and three Trustees. President—M. M. Bell; Vice-President—Isaac Talbott; Secretary—W. J. Niles; Treasurer—Daniel Clarke; Trustees—Jerry Lee, William Jones, and Abner Webster.

RESOLVED, That this Colony shall have from one to two hundred militia, more or less, as the case may require, to keep peace and order, and any member failing to pay in his dues, as aforesaid, or failing to comply with the above rules in any particular, will not be recognized or protected by the Colony.

C. VIGILANTES

Men who took the law into their own hands and punished criminals – often violently – without the benefit of a judge and jury or trial!

Vigilante justice was administered rapidly and without any legal backing. Horse thieves and robbers beware!

Unfortunately, there were bound to be occasions when mistakes were made and the miscarriage of justice resulted in innocent men dying.



E. “JIM CROW” LAWS

Laws which enforced segregation in the South were called this – after an racist and bigoted comedy routine used to mock African-Americans. The separation of the races in all public places – including water fountains, restaurants, schools, and transportation systems.

These laws persisted in the South well into the 1960s, despite a series of Supreme Court decisions which made the laws unconstitutional.

“Jim Crow” was an old, racist comedy routine which white performers would put on – wearing “blackface” and behaving foolishly to entertain white audiences.





ORGANIZING THE VOCABULARY

Segregation and “Jim Crow”

Diversity and Discrimination

Outliers

SEGREGATION AND “JIM CROW” VOCABULARY

Chinese Exclusion Act

Segregation

Plessy V. Ferguson

“Jim Crow” Laws

Ku Klux Klan

Literacy Tests

DIVERSITY AND DISCRIMINATION IN THE WEST

Chinese Exclusion Act

Vigilantes

Central Pacific Railroad

Vaqueros

“Exodusters”

Reservations

Woman’s Suffrage

OUTLIERS — NEUTRAL VOCABULARY

“The Frontier”

Barbed Wire

The Comstock Lode



WHICH SOCIETY IS MORE JUST — THE
SEGREGATED SOUTH, OR THE WESTERN
FRONTIER OF THE LATE 19TH CENTURY?

BOTH SOCIETIES HAD PLENTY OF WORK TO DO...

While Southern society clearly had a problem with racism and violence – lynchings and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan should suffice as examples of this – the West was not exactly a land of equal opportunity either.

There were certain values which existed in the West which promoted toleration. For example, women gained the right to vote in Western states long before they did in most Southern States. Also, there are instances of interracial cooperation which are important examples of toleration: about one third of cowboys were either African-Americans or Latinos; the Transcontinental Railroad was constructed by a diverse group of people including Chinese, African-American, Irish, ex-Confederate and ex-Union laborers.

But, vigilante justice often target the marginalized “outsiders” in the West: Chinese, Mexicans, and Native Americans were often target. Segregation existed here, as well. And there would be a long history of war between Americans and Mexicans or Native Americans.